

EXTERNAL MESSAGE PASSING METHOD AND APPARATUS

ABSTRACT OF DISCLOSURE

An apparatus which uses channel counters in combination with
5 channel count read instructions as a means of providing information
that data in a given channel is valid or has not been previously
read. The counter may also, in the situation of the channel being
defined as blocking, be used to prevent the unintentional
overwriting of data in a register used by the channel or,
10 alternatively, prevent further communications with the device
assigned to that channel when a given count occurs. Intelligent
external devices may also use channel count read instructions sent
to the counting mechanism for reading from and writing to the
channel.